Amount for Maintenance of National Highway No. 5 in Orissa

1336. SHRIRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Highway No. 5 connecting Daitary with Paradeep Port in Orissa is in a very bad shape due to lack of proper maintenance; and

(b) if so, the amount of money sanctioned for the maintenance of this Highway during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Development and maintenance of National Highways is a continuous process and the same (including NH-5) are being maintained in traffic worthy condition within available resources;

(b) A sum of Rs. 14.28 crores has been allocated to the Govt. of Orissa during 1996-97 for maintenance of all National Highways.

Proposal to reduce the cost of STD calls in rural areas

1337. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to reduce the cost of STD calls made to and from rural areas;

(b) if so, the details of this proposal;

(c) whether it is a fact that rural people are paying comparatively higher charges for phone service than urban phone owners; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce this discrimination in rents and call charges?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No, Sir; on the other hand, significant concessions have been extended to rural subscribers w.e.f. 1.1.96, details of which are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Statement

1. The Rural Telecom Package announced on 22 November 1995 has the following components:

(a) Free calls increased from 150 to 250 per billing cycle for rural subscribers.

(b) Registration fee reduced from Rs. 2000.00 to Rs. 1000.00 for rural subscribers serviced by exchange systems upto 10,000 lines.

(c) The telephone rental for all rural subscribers reduced to Rs. 100.00.

(d) The amount of Installation charges presently fixed at Rs. 100/- shall be maintained upto 31.3.98 for rural subscribers.

(e) Local, STD & ISD charges reduced by 25% for first 200 calls beyond free call - limit for rural subscribers.

(f) Commission payable to Panchayat PCO Franchisees enhanced from 20% to 50% on gross turn-over including the telephones to be provided to the franchisees of Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna launched by Deptt. of Posts.

(g) Commission to STD/ISD/PCO franchisees:

(i) In rural areas enhanced to 25% on gross turn-over per month.

(ii) Commission to PCO franchisees in non-rural areas of the predominantly hilly states/tribal and hilly areas enhanced to 20% on the gross turn-over upto Rs. 50,000.00 per month and 15% there-after.